

Reader Letters



blades and the other four are "L-knives". Both kinds of knives are adjustable. Works great for cane, bean, corn, rice, and cotton farmers throughout the South and we think has a lot of potential in other areas. We also offer a machine with an 18-in. dia. cutter head that has six blades. (**Bayou Machine & Fabrication, 1786 Anse Broussard Hwy., Breaux Bridge, La. 70517 ph 318 332-6518**)

About nine years ago while managing a ranch here in Arizona I came up with a lawn sprinkler base that can be moved - without tipping



over - by simply pulling on the hose. The base consists of three steel legs (one has a ring attached to one end). A garden hose is passed through the ring and screws into a T-fitting on the base. The sprinkler head screws into the top of the T-fitting. When you pull on the hose, the leg with the ring in it lifts up and acts like the hitch on a 2-wheel trailer. Because the other 2 legs are set at an angle, they slide off objects without hanging up. Also, the weight of the hose passing through the ring over the third leg helps give it stability when it's bumped by animals, which keeps it from tipping over.

The legs bolt into the base, allowing it to be easily packaged and manufactured. I'm looking for a manufacturer. (**Howard H. Horinek, 860 S. Church Ave., Superior, Ariz. 85273 ph 520 689-5326**)

I really enjoyed the story explaining how Jule Jacobson converted a 1983 Owatonna 260 swather into a zero turn radius lawn mower (Vol. 22, No. 4). After reading it I decided to build my own "swather-mower" and am about half done with it. Apparently I'm not the only one who thinks it's a great idea. When I called Jacobson for help he told me so many of his neighbors are converting swathers into mowers that it's getting hard to find swathers in his area.

After attending a truck auction I couldn't resist picking up several Ryder trucks at bargain prices. The trucks had more than 100,000 miles on them but were in good



shape and looked new. I resold some of them, but kept one and converted it to pull my 28-ft. gooseneck trailer and a 24-ft. livestock trailer. The truck I converted is a 1992 GMC equipped with a 366 cu. in. fuel injected gas engine that has about 210 horsepower and an Allison automatic transmission. I paid \$12,000 for it. I shortened the truck by 8 ft., cutting off part of the driveshaft and part of the frame, and bolted a new 12-ft. long tread plate deck onto the frame. The deck is equipped with a tow ball hitch on back. The truck originally had three leaf springs and rode stiff whenever I used it to pull the trailer. I removed one of the springs to make it ride better.

I built it because I was tearing up my pickup when pulling trailers. This truck is built to last. It has a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of 23,000 lbs. compared to the 10,000-lb. GVV of a conventional 1-ton pickup. (**Tim Nelson, 32 Ridge Drive, Carlinville, Ill. 62626 (ph 217 854-6100)**)

For several years we've had good results using a discarded rug in our cantaloupe patch. We start out by simply placing the rug over green grass. We cut a hole wherever we want to plant. Next, we dig out holes in the grass



and fill them with loose soil. Then we put out plants from a nearby nursery. One time a heavy rain in August was a problem. The plants looked wilted - just like house plants do when they get too much water. They needed air. We solved the problem by pushing 2 by 4's under the rug, then lifting the 2 by 4's and placing a concrete block under them. It's a good idea to move the patch to a new location next year as insects can get to be a problem. Moving the patch helps keep them under control. (**C.F. Marley, 26288 Oconee Rd., Nokomis, Ill. 62075 ph 217 563-2588**)

I converted an old cotton picker into a self-propelled backhoe. It worked so well that I also built a front-end loader for it that can be equipped with either bale forks or a bucket. I started with a Deere 99 cotton picker. I removed the heads and basket and moved the control platform to the rear. I mounted a home-built 3-pt. hitch on the picker's main wheel housing and use the basket cylinders to raise or lower the backhoe and loader. The hitch is raised or lowered by a hydraulic pump. I used 2 by 4 box steel to make the loader arms and 3-in. sq. box steel to make a frame for the bale forks and bucket, which are pinned onto



the arms. A hydraulic cylinder mounted behind the frame is used to move the bale up or down and to tilt the bucket.

I removed the original 16 by 28 tires and replaced them with Deere 4400 combine wheels equipped with rice and cane tires that are the same size as the old ones. However, the new wheels are narrower which reduces tread width by 18 in., allowing the rig to maneuver in tight spaces. I mounted a passenger seat next to the driver's seat. The brake, clutch, and gear shift levers are mounted in front of the driver's seat, but a 2-spool valve that controls the backhoe and loader cylinders is mounted in front of the passenger seat.

I can lift two small round bales or one large one and stack 5-ft. bales three high in my barn. (**Bill Woods, 12135 Hwy. 8 W., Grenada, Miss. 38901 ph 601 227-9096 or 601 647-2456**)

My son John raises cattle in a rotational grazing system and has a pasture that's sur-



The gathering wheels on my Hesston 5530 round baler were worn out so I replaced them with ones that I made out of an old 15-in. tire. The ground-driven rakes - one on each side - gather hay into a windrow that feeds directly into the baler. The original gathering wheels were star-shaped discs made from a rubber that deteriorated over the years. Each one would have cost \$199.99 to replace.

I cut the sidewalls off a 15-in. tire at the rounded by smooth 5-wire electric fence. I live just across the road from the pasture, but the gate leading into it is about 800 ft. away. I often like to go inside the pasture for a better look at the cattle, but I can't crawl over this



type of fencing like I could with older-style fencing. To solve the problem I made a permanent, two-way ladder that mounts over the fence and has legs on either side, allowing me to climb up over the fence and back down the other side. The ladder is about 6 ft. high. I used treated 2 by 4's to make the legs and wooden decking material that I cut up to make the rungs. The legs are anchored about 15 inches deep in the ground and are bolted together at the top. (**Noel Hebert, Owaneco, Ill. 62555 ph 217 879-2596**)



Thanks for the story on my "wired" round bale feeder that reduces waste (Vol. 22, No. 1). The story described how I use a 3-pt. boom



to lift the rack up by the top ring and lower it over the bale without ever leaving the tractor seat. Here are some photos that show how the boom can be mounted on front of my Ford 7700 2-WD tractor, allowing me to haul the feeder and carry a bale on back at the same time. The boom is offset to the right side of the tractor so I can see the end of the boom

first groove and cut out the tire bead. Then I bolted them to the gathering wheel rims. I've used them for two years and they still show no sign of wear or fatigue. Cutting the tire sidewall at the first groove adds stiffness to the sweeping action of the wheel and is actually an improvement over the original design. (**Ernest J. Filep, Rt. 1, Box 75AB1, Concord, Va. 24538 ph 804 376-5688**)

alongside the tractor. (The hood is too high to see the boom if it was center mounted). Another photo shows how the boom hooks



onto the side of the rack. (**Robert Schum, HC 68, Box 221, Saint Meinrad, Ind. 47577 ph 812 357-5901**)

I made this round bale "basket" feeder for my small flock of sheep. Sheep can eat from the bottom, sides, or ends of it. The biggest ad-



vantage over conventional bale feeders is that the bale hangs in a basket above the ground so there's no way an animal can get in and spoil the feed. The bottom of the basket is 2 ft. off the ground where it's up out of the mud and manure, allowing animals to finish off the



entire bale. If any leaves or small pieces of hay fall onto the ground the sheep can eat them before they spoil. I can usually feed 4 to 5 bales in the same spot before the ground underneath the basket gets too fouled. Runners at the bottom of the frame allows the feeder to be easily pushed to new ground or lifted by a loader tractor.

I think the same idea would also work for cattle if the basket was mounted higher off the ground. (**Jerry Hessman, 10948 104th Rd., Dodge City, Kan. 67801 ph 316 227-3688**)

I came up with a self-closing walk-through gate that's patterned after the kind of gates